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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 52nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 7.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 124: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.19

1. Mr. MERRIFIELD (Canada), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Chairman, said that lengthy informal consultations has led to a consensus text which had led to a consensus text which he hoped the Committee could adopt without a vote. The operative portion of the draft text had been divided into four parts, the first of which determined the groups of countries into which the newest States Members of the United Nations were to be placed for the purpose of financing peace-keeping operations. With regard to the second part, he stressed that the delegations which had participated in the informal consultations were adamant that the wording agreed at that time should be retained. Accordingly, the phrase "into groups" in the sole operative paragraph should be revised to read "into the groups", and the reference to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly in the same paragraph should read "forty-eighth regular session".

2. Draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.19, as orally revised, was adopted.

3. Mr. RANDRIAMALALA (Madagascar) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus on the draft resolution, albeit with reservations. The draft text did not correct any of the anomalies recognized by the General Assembly. In particular, it failed to take into account the situation of the countries listed in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolutin 46/246. Those States were being penalized by the fact that their inclusion in the list of least developed countries continued to be postponed.

4. Mr. RAE (India), supported by Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) and Mr. BARIMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), said that although his delegation had joined in the consensus on the draft resolution, it believed that the existing arrangements for the financing of peace-keeping operations, referred to in part II of the draft resolution, had served the Organization well for 20 years and, while ad hoc in nature, ought to be institutionalized. The mandate of the Committee's open-ended working group had been limited to investigating discrepancies in the placement of some States in the groups established under those arrangements.

5. Mr. CARDOSO (Brazil) said that his delegation, too, had joined in the consensus, and believed that the existing arrangements recognized the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council, while reflecting the effective capacity to pay of all Member States, something which was not always taken into account in the regular budget.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Draft decision A/C.5/47/L.31

6. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) said that paragraph (b) (iii) should be deleted from the text of the draft decision.

7. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that, although the report referred to in paragraph (c) (v) had been requested, it had never been issued. He suggested that the words "(not yet issued)" should be added after the title of the report.

8. Draft decision A/C.5/47/L.31, as amended, was adopted.

9. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that in his delegation's view, although the Committee had taken note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations (A/45/797), that did not mean that the report had been duly considered during the current session; his delegation hoped that the substance of the report would be considered, if possible at the next session of the General Assembly.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

Biennial programme of work of the Committee for 1993-1994 (A/C.5/47/L.30)

10. The CHAIRMAN recalled that in 1991 the General Assembly had adopted resolution 46/220 concerning the rationalization of the work of the Fifth Committee. In paragraph 6 of that resolution, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Committee for consideration and approval each year a proposed biennial programme of work, taking into account relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly of that year. In that connection, he drew attention to draft decision A/C.5/47/L.30, containing the biennial programme of work of the Committee for 1993-1994.

11. Mr. LÄHDEVIRTH (Finland) said that the items in document A/C.5/47/L.30 did not appear to be fully consistent with General Assembly resolution 46/220. He was surprised, for example, to note that the item on the Joint Inspection Unit had been included in the programme of work for both 1993 and 1994, as it was his understanding that the item was to be considered only in odd years.

12. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) recalled that the Committee had decided to defer the item on personnel questions to the Assembly's resumed session in 1993; he wondered, however, what action the Committee should take if it could not reach a consensus on the draft decision.

13. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) recalled the Committee's decision to consider the item on the United Nations common system each year in connection with proposals concerning base floor for salary scale adjustments and other ad hoc exceptions to the general programme of biennialization. The Committee would need to consider the United Nations pension system in 1993, at least in so far as amendments to the Pension Fund Regulations were concerned. Such amendments were the necessary outcome of the comprehensive review of General Service pensionable remuneration and must be adopted at the forty-eighth session if the new system was to enter into force on 1 January 1994. He further recalled that resolution 46/220 provided for ad hoc exceptions to the general pattern; presumably, the programme of work could be adjusted on the basis of proposals from the Secretary-General through the General Committee should developments so require prior to the opening of the forty-eighth session.

14. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that the subtitle of document A/C.5/47/L.30 might give rise to confusion, since the Committee would consider 1992 items during 1993. He wondered whether it might not be preferable to refer to the programme of work for the forty-eighth session rather than for 1993-1994.

15. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee), replying to the questions raised by the representatives of Finland and Morocco, said that document A/C.5/47/L.30 took account not only of the programme of work proposed in General Assembly resolution 46/220, but also of the resolutions and decisions adopted at the current session. Since the Committee had decided to consider the items on the United Nations pension system and common system in 1993, and had requested annual reports on the Joint Inspection Unit, the Secretariat had had little choice but to include those items in the programme of work.

16. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that while he appreciated the explanation given by the Secretary of the Committee, he wondered whether document A/C.5/47/L.30 was necessary, since General Assembly resolution 46/220 remained valid. If the document was to be retained, he suggested that the item on the United Nations pension system should be added to the programme of work for 1993 and that the item on the Joint Inspection Unit should be deleted therefrom, as it would conflict with draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.10, which the Committee had recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

17. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) said that the proposal made by the Colombian representative would be taken into account when the document was finalized.

18. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft decision A/C.5/47/L.30, as orally amended by the United Kingdom representative, without a vote.

19. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 112: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

20. The CHAIRMAN said that the question of whether respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations should henceforth be considered as a separate agenda item had been discussed in informal consultations. While there had been general agreement that the current sub-item could indeed be converted into a separate agenda item, there had been no agreement as to which Main Committee (the Fifth or the Sixth) should deal with the item. Accordingly, it had been agreed that the Committee should revert to the matter at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. He took it that the Committee wished to proceed accordingly.

21. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that, as his delegation had had no prior knowledge of the question, it would be unable to take a decision at the current meeting; it preferred, however, to retain the question as a sub-item.

22. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) suggested that the Committee could consider the question at the resumed forty-seventh session.

23. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that while he had no difficulty with the previous speaker's proposal, he failed to see the need for further discussion on the subject.

24. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that a decision to defer consideration of the status of the sub-item to the forty-eighth session was not consistent with the Committee's adoption, earlier in the meeting, of its programme of work. He urged, therefore, that it should be considered at the resumed forty-seventh session.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the light of the views expressed, he took it that the Committee wished to revert to the question of whether or not the current sub-item should be transformed into a separate agenda item at the resumed forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

26. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

Draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29

27. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados), introducing the draft decision, said that the informal consultations had failed to reach consensus on the decision. In particular, during the current assessment period, two Member States had had their rates of assessment adjusted and those States, together with the

(Mr. Maycock, Barbados)

successor State to a former Member State, each had specific interests to protect, which had had indirect repercussions for all Member States. Various compromise solutions had been attempted, some of which had resulted in assessment scales which fell short of 100 per cent of the budget and were therefore regarded as unacceptable by certain delegations. In addition, the Secretariat had indicated that it would have difficulties with such a solution. Two options resulting in 100 per cent scales had been explored; one had finally been rejected, while the other was contained in draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22, prepared in a final attempt to break the deadlock.

28. Although a number of delegations were unhappy with the arrangements proposed, they appeared to be the only means of ensuring that a scale of assessments would be established in 1992. He therefore recommended draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 for adoption by the Committee.

29. Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine), referring to draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29, said that the Legal Counsel, in his statement at the 38th meeting, had indicated that the Committee on Contributions had recommended erroneous treatment of Belarus and Ukraine and that the adoption of their recommended rates of assessment, as contained in the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/47/11, paras. 58-59), would not be consistent with rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The recommendations constituted a revision of General Assembly resolution 46/221, which had been adopted by consensus, and a recorded vote would have to be taken on the draft decision. The Committee on Contributions had had no mandate to propose the increase in question; the rules on the scheme of limits had not been applied, to name just one example of mismanagement and improper action. It was not in the interest of the United Nations to adopt a decision that was not legally valid.

30. Ukraine, which - together with Belarus - had experienced the Chernobyl catastrophe, could not pay a higher rate. Belarus and Ukraine understood that numerous factors needed to be taken into account and that many changes had taken place, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet Union's seat at the United Nations had been taken over by a country that had undertaken at the time to honour all the Soviet Union's obligations, including its financial obligations. Unfortunately, the financial obligations of that former super-Power had had to be assumed disproportionately by Belarus, Ukraine and 12 other countries. Moreover, those financial obligations were not offset by any corresponding advantages.

31. In a memorandum dated 11 December 1992 addressed to the Secretary-General, Belarus and Ukraine had made the following points: the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions set out in its report had been adopted in violation of the principle of equality of all Member States and, contrary to existing procedures and practice, envisaged a discriminatory increase of more than 50 per cent in the contributions of Belarus and Ukraine to the budget; Belarus and Ukraine were perplexed by their inclusion in the report in the category of new Member States, and by the subsequent

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

inappropriate and unjustified actions to determine their new financial obligations to the United Nations; there could be no valid explanation for the recommendation by the Committee on Contributions that the rates of assessment for 1993 and 1994 should be 0.48 per cent in the case of Belarus and 1.87 per cent in the case of Ukraine, since the Committee on Contributions was in any event not authorized to take such action; the financial obligations of Belarus and Ukraine to the United Nations had already been assessed, as determined by the scale of assessments for 1992, 1993 and 1994, which had been adopted in General Assembly resolution 46/221; Belarus and Ukraine regarded the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions, as set out in its report, as inappropriate, and had instructed their delegations to oppose their adoption; they suggested that at the current session the General Assembly should confirm the scale of assessments that it had adopted at its forty-sixth session, and determine the contributions to be made by new Member States in accordance with the existing rules. Before the issue of the scale of assessments was taken up again, consultations could be held among interested parties to ensure adoption of the scale by consensus.

32. Ukraine called on the Committee not to adopt draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 and requested a recorded vote on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22.

33. Mr. SUGANO (Japan), referring to draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22 and draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29, asked which of the two drafts the Committee would take action on first.

34. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados) said that the Committee should first take action on the draft decision. Depending on the outcome of its consideration of the draft decision, the Committee might or might not be able to take action on the draft resolution at the current meeting.

35. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 had been submitted prior to draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22. As far as procedure was concerned, he was suggesting that the Committee should take action on the draft decision first and then, as proposed by the representative of Barbados, decide whether action on the draft resolution was necessary. He had originally planned to take up the draft resolution at the current meeting on the assumption that it would be adopted by consensus; moreover, since the Committee was supposed to have completed its work by 18 December, many delegations had asked him to expedite the remaining substantive business at the current meeting so that they could report back to their Governments. However, the statement just made by the representative of the Ukraine made it clear that a consensus on the draft resolution was unlikely. It would therefore be more appropriate to act on the draft decision first and then decide how to proceed.

36. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) expressed appreciation to the representative of Barbados for his intensive efforts to guide the very complex negotiations on the item under consideration. Draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 summed up the

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

content of those negotiations. His delegation was deeply concerned that, those efforts notwithstanding, it had not been possible to reach a consensus on an issue that was vital to the United Nations. It could not support the draft decision, which represented a complete break with existing practice and violated fundamental principles and criteria and rules of procedure for assessing Member States' contributions.

37. The draft decision was based entirely on the recommendations of the fifty-second session of the Committee on Contributions. The report of the Committee on Contributions to the current session of the General Assembly stated clearly that the Committee had considered the issue in accordance with paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 46/221 A and with rule 160 of the rules of procedure. However, his delegation felt that the Committee on Contributions had not been guided by those provisions and that, in deciding to revise the assessments of the Ukraine and Belarus and to recommend that they be increased by over 50 per cent, it had taken a legally unjustified step that exceeded its competence as a technical subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. The Legal Counsel, in his opinion, had noted that the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions breached the provisions of both General Assembly resolution 46/221 A and rule 160 of the rules of procedure. When asked whether the General Assembly at its current session could revise the rates for Belarus and Ukraine despite the existence of fundamental principles and consensus decisions on that issue, the Legal Counsel had recommended against any such change, on the grounds that it would create a very dangerous precedent and give rise to financial and technical problems. He had also said that it would be discriminatory and selective to use a majority of votes to overrule important provisions of the Charter and the rules of procedure, criteria and consensus resolutions of the General Assembly. Such a situation might lead to a violation of the principles of international law and of the law of international organizations.

38. The Fifth Committee and the General Assembly as a whole should not simply rubber stamp recommendations submitted to them by technical subsidiary organs but should consider them in their broader political context. The time had come for the General Assembly to provide new guidelines to the Committee on Contributions to ensure that it took account of the complex political, social, economic and legal aspects of the assessment of contributions. The Committee on Contributions should help the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly to apply fundamental principles while taking fair account of the interests of all Member States.

39. His delegation would vote against the draft decision and reserved the right to explain its vote in the plenary Assembly. The Fifth Committee and the General Assembly should not rush to take action on the issue and his delegation therefore urged other delegations not to vote for the draft decision.

40. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that his Government had great sympathy for the economic and other difficulties facing the States of the former Soviet Union and regretted that the efforts to reach a consensus on draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 had been unsuccessful. Nevertheless, his delegation recognized that the only solution at the current juncture was to adopt the recommendations by the Committee on Contributions and, therefore, supported the draft decision under consideration.

41. Ms. SIMONE (Armenia) expressed her country's great disappointment that the Committee had been unable to reach a consensus on the scale of assessments and deeply regretted that the matter had to be put to a vote. Armenia had no alternative but to vote against the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions.

42. The break-up of the Soviet Union had left in its wake enormously complex problems for Armenia and the other Republics concerned as they made the transition to a market economy. Armenia had declared itself to be in a state of national emergency; and shortages of food, medicine and fuel had left the population struggling for its very survival. In spite of all that, her country remained committed to the ideals of democracy and a free market economy.

43. Unfortunately, there did not appear to have been sufficient political will to solve the problem of the scale of assessments. Armenia had participated in the discussion because it wanted to be fairly assessed on the basis of its own national accounts information. It was also a question of the right of a number of the newly independent States to be treated as equal members in the United Nations system as well as respect for national sovereignty. Unfortunately, the rights of the 14 newly independent States conflicted with the interests of a few. Under the terms of the draft decision in question, her country's true independence in the United Nations system would be delayed. Nevertheless, whatever decision was taken by the General Assembly regarding the scale of assessments, Armenia would fulfil its obligations.

44. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said it was unfortunate that in the time available, the attempt to balance interests and reach a consensus on the scale of assessments had not been successful. From the very beginning, Canada had felt uncomfortable with the procedures put forward by the Committee on Contributions. While not binding, the opinion provided by the Legal Counsel to the Committee merited respect and consideration. It was clear from that opinion that in adopting draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29, the Fifth Committee was being asked to act contrary to rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and that the manner in which the recommendations were put forward by the Committee on Contributions was legally untenable. Delegations should consider the precedent-setting effect of the adoption of the draft resolution, which Canada was not in a position to support.

45. Mr. LUEDIG (Estonia) said that throughout the discussion on the scale of assessments his country had only wanted to be treated like other Member States, without continuing to bear the burden of the former Soviet Union. In putting draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 to a vote, the Committee was allowing one Member State to exercise a veto through its delegation's unwillingness to take into account the interests of other delegations and reach a consensus solution in which the concerns of that delegation could still have been met. The approach by the Committee on Contributions to distribute rather than calculate the assessments would place a burden on Estonian citizens that was beyond their capacity to assume. At a time when the Committee on Contributions was asking the newly independent States to shoulder a major burden regarding the excessive political debt of the former Soviet Union, schools, hospitals and homes throughout Estonia would not be heated because no one could afford to purchase fuel oil. If the draft decision was adopted, Estonia, nevertheless, would continue to work within the system and appeal to the Committee on Contributions in accordance with rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

46. Mr. MIHAI (Romania) said that, unfortunately, a consensus could have been reached only through a political solution that was well beyond the limited technical competence of the Committee on Contributions. Romania was unhappy that a political solution to deal with the extraordinary circumstances of the situation at hand had not been found and would abstain in the vote on the draft decision. It was hoped that in future, the Committee on Contributions and the Fifth Committee would find appropriate ways to address the legitimate concerns raised by the newly independent States.

47. Mr. SUZIEDELIS (Lithuania) said that his country would vote against draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 for the reasons that it had stated in previous discussions of the item and reserved the right to express its views on the matter in plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

48. Mr. NOVRUZOV (Azerbaijan) said that, like the previous speaker, his delegation also wished to reserve the right to express its views on the question in plenary meeting of the General Assembly. In spite of the enormous efforts made to achieve a result acceptable to all the Republics of the former Soviet Union, the position of one delegation had made it impossible to reach a consensus on the scale of assessments. It was hoped that future cooperation would lead to more fruitful results.

49. A recorded vote was taken on draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29.

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar,

Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Against: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine.

Abstaining: Algeria, Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, France, Grenada, Guyana, Hungary, Israel, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Maldives, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Sierra Leone, Slovenia.

50. Draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 was adopted by 62 votes to 15, with 19 abstentions.

51. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that his delegation understood the position of those Member States that had deemed it necessary to oppose the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29. At the same time, the United Nations had to adopt a scale of assessment that was acceptable to the majority of Members of the Organization. Nevertheless, rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provided for appeals by Members for a change of assessments. It was unfortunate that none of the various compromise proposals put forward in the informal consultations had been able to command the necessary measure of agreement. He deeply regretted that the vote on the draft decision represented the first departure since the forty-third session of the General Assembly from the practice of reaching a consensus on questions relating to the regular budget. That departure, however, had come about under the special circumstances resulting from the admission of a large number of new Member States following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. His delegation hoped that in time all the legitimate concerns of those States could be accommodated and believed that the Committee must strive to reach the broadest possible agreement on the issues on its agenda. That approach strengthened the United Nations and was to the collective benefit of its Members.

52. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that although the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions represented a bad solution, the alternatives were even more painful. His delegation had hoped that the Fifth Committee would not approach the question of the scale of assessments on purely technical grounds, but would consider the moral and political aspects. It was regrettable that short-term fiscal considerations had generally prevailed and that a number of Member States were unfairly burdened. Such short-sighted decisions did not solve problems and jeopardized the stability of the Organization. Accordingly, his delegation had been unable to support the draft decision and firmly believed that the situation facing the newly independent States concerned should be rectified no later than 1994. A fair

(Mr. Karbuczky, Hungary)

solution could be found on the basis of broader equitable sharing of the surplus of the assessment of the former Soviet Union. The Committee on Contributions should play a key role in bringing about a general solution to the problem.

53. Mr. PENEV (Bulgaria) said that the task confronting the Committee on Contributions had been truly unprecedented. His delegation had stressed the need to reach a consensus and deeply regretted the fact that the constructive efforts by all Member States had not led to a generally accepted text. It was essential to maintain the practice followed in recent years of taking decisions on budgetary and administrative questions on the basis of consensus, particularly with regard to the scale of assessments. The draft decision just adopted would have a negative impact on the confidence of Member States in the proper application of the capacity-to-pay principle as well as the general principle of equity in sharing the financial requirements of the Organization. For those reasons, his delegation, after very careful consideration, had found it appropriate to abstain in the vote.

54. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) said that, while his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision in view of the need for a scale of assessments for 1993, it regretted that, in spite of the considerable efforts made, a consensus had not been achieved.

55. Mr. KOCATÜRK (Turkey) said that his delegation, which always supported the principle of consensus, had voted against the draft decision. Turkey's position was one of principle and he fully shared the views expressed by the representative of Canada.

56. Mr. MÜNCH (Germany) said that his delegation, like that of the United Kingdom, had expressed understanding for the difficulties confronting the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, while some of the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions could be regarded as questionable, in view of the failure to reach a consensus there had been no alternative to the adoption of those recommendations. The vote just taken should remain an exception and the practice of consensus should be adhered to in the Fifth Committee.

57. Ms. MEYER (New Zealand) said that her delegation was deeply disappointed that it had not been possible to arrive at a consensus on the scale of assessments. She had voted against the draft decision on the grounds that paragraphs 51 to 64 of the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/47/11) represented unfinished business. The Committee on Contributions should be requested to resume its work in that regard as soon as possible. In that connection, she stressed the need to find a just solution acceptable to all Member States. In reaching its decision on the matter, her delegation had been mindful of the need to give weight to the opinion provided by the Legal Counsel and felt that it was not desirable for the Fifth Committee to recommend that the General Assembly should not follow its own rules of procedure.

58. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his country, which would have preferred to reach a consensus on the question of the scale of assessments, respected the views of those delegations which were directly concerned and which had not supported the draft decision. The Netherlands had participated actively in the negotiation process and had been prepared to consider burden-sharing arrangements. While his delegation regretted the departure from the practice of reaching a consensus, it also believed that that step was the result of extraordinary circumstances.

59. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that the draft decision under consideration was the best possible solution to a difficult situation. The failure to reach a consensus in spite of the great efforts made was regrettable and should not constitute a precedent changing the Committee's practice of following the principle of consensus.

60. Miss SHITAKHA (Kenya) said that her delegation, which as a matter of principle tended to support the recommendations of expert committees, had voted in favour of the draft decision. Nevertheless, Kenya regretted that the Committee on Contributions had felt that it was necessary to assess Belarus and Ukraine as new Member States. The Commitee on Contributions had erred in its treatment of those States, in total disregard for well-defined rules. In that connection, she fully supported the comments made by the representative of Canada on the opinion provided by the Legal Counsel. It was hoped that Belarus and Ukraine would be given the opportunity to present their cases before the Committee on Contributions at its next session and that their presentations would be given the serious consideration that they deserved.

61. Mr. ELZIMAITY (Egypt) commended the efforts made to reach a consensus on the question under consideration and reaffirmed his delegation's commitment to the principles guiding the financing of the Organization's work as the collective responsibility of the Member States to assume the financial burden involved in accordance with the real capacity of each Member State to pay contributions.

62. Ms. ERIKSSON FOGH (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, expressed deep regret that it had not been possible to reach a consensus on the question under consideration. The Nordic countries had voted against draft decision A/C.5/47/L.29 because the General Assembly should have demonstrated the necessary political will to address with the seriousness that it deserved the question of the rates of assessment for the Baltic States and those of the Commonwealth of Independent States. During the deliberations in the Fifth Committee, the limitations of the current methodology for dealing with that situation had become very clear. Given the necessary political will, it would have been possible to arrive at an agreement mandating the Committee on Contributions to review the question in order to reach a solution based on fairness and equitable burden-sharing. The Nordic countries reaffirmed their confidence in the Committee on Contributions and its status as an expert body.

(Ms. Eriksson Fogh, Sweden)

63. It was hoped that the discussions at the current session of the General Assembly would provide the Committee on Contributions with clear political guidance for its next session. She urged that Committee to bear in mind rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly when it considered the rates of assessment of the Baltic States and those of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Nordic countries reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of consensus on issues related to the programme budget and the financing of the Organization. The vote just taken was an exception resulting from an unusual situation and should not create a precedent for future deliberations.

64. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision because there was no viable alternative to the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions. The adoption of the draft decision, however, should not prevent the newly independent States that so wished from appealing to the Committee on Contributions for changes in their rates of assessment.

65. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said that his delegation profoundly regretted the fact that it had been impossible to reach a consensus on the draft decision in spite of the considerable efforts made. While Mexico understood the serious difficulties which the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions would cause for some Member States, it considered that, under current circumstances, those recommendations constituted the only viable and technically sound solution to a very complex problem. His country, therefore, had voted in favour of the draft decision on the understanding that the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions represented an unavoidable transitional step and that the rates of assessment could be adjusted in future as provided for in paragraph 70 of the Committee's report (A/47/11). It was hoped that future rates of assessment for all Member States would be determined on the basis of reliable, verifiable and comparable data.

66. Mr. RAE (India) expressed regret that it had been impossible to reach a consensus in view of the complexity of the issue and the limited time available. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision, which, albeit flawed, was the only realistic approach.

67. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) expressed his delegation's deep regret that it had been necessary to put the draft decision to a vote. Ghana had voted in favour of the draft decision with great reluctance. Belarus and Ukraine were not new Member States and therefore should not be treated on that basis. While appreciating the difficulties encountered by the Committee on Contributions in dealing with the statistical data on those two countries, he stressed the need to adhere to the principle of the capacity of Member States to pay. Ghana had voted in favour of the draft decision because, under the circumstances, there was no viable alternative. His delegation had sought to serve the higher interests of the Organization and had cast its vote on the understanding that the Committee on Contributions could consider appeals from the Member States

(Mr. Dankwa, Ghana)

concerned and might decide to adjust their rates of assessment in the preparation of the next scale of assessments.

68. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision but would have preferred to see a consensus because of its belief in the need to respect the principles of collective responsibility for financial matters and the real capacity to pay of Member States. It was, however, convinced that the Committee on Contributions should continue its efforts to correct current imbalances, taking account of the information provided to it by the Member States concerned.

69. Mr. GIUFFRIDA (Italy) deeply regretted the outcome of discussions on the item under consideration. His delegation recognized the difficult situation of the former Soviet republics and hoped to see agreement on a fair assessment of their contributions to the Organization in the near future.

70. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) said that she, like the representative of the United Kingdom, considered it unfortunate that a vote had been taken on such an important decision. Not all Member States had displayed the flexibility in terms of sharing burdens which would have been required to achieve a consensus. Her delegation thus had no alternative but to support the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions. Member States should, however, exercise their rights under rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

71. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) affirmed his delegation's strong belief in the principle whereby decisions of a financial and budgetary nature, including the scale of assessments, should be adopted by consensus whenever possible. It understood the complexities and positions of principle involved in the issue under consideration and took particular note of the legal opinion expressed with respect to Belarus and Ukraine. However, it had voted in favour of the draft decision because it felt that agreement on a scale of assessments could not be further delayed, thus endorsing a constructive decision based on the only option available. It hoped that the decision would be the subject of further review by the Committee on Contributions.

72. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said that his delegation fully endorsed the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom. It understood the economic difficulties faced by new Member States and hoped that the vote which had just taken place would prove to be as exceptional as the circumstances which had given rise to it.

73. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision because it felt, regrettably, that it had no other option. However, it hoped that the Committee on Contributions would produce more satisfactory solutions when it next met to consider the issue.

74. Mr. CARDOSO (Brazil) said that his delegation, when voting in favour of the draft decision, had been responding, in the absence of a consensus, to the need to ensure a means by which the Organization might apportion its expenditure among all Member States within prevailing time constraints.

75. Mr. TANG Guangting (China), while deeply regretting the failure to achieve consensus, was of the view that the Organization must have a scale of assessments for the coming year, particularly in view of the financial difficulties which it faced. Given the limited time available, his delegation had had no option but to vote in favour of the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions. It hoped that the Committee on Contributions would further investigate the situation of the countries concerned, with a view to elaborating a more just and reasonable scale at the earliest opportunity, and that the Fifth Committee would continue to seek solutions in a spirit of consensus.

76. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) hoped that the failure to achieve a consensus would not be repeated in future. His delegation had abstained from the vote because it considered the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions to be unsatisfactory. It appealed to the Committee to take account of the difficult economic situation of certain Member States and to ensure compliance with the principle whereby scales of assessments should be based on capacity to pay.

77. Mr. BAUMANIS (Latvia) reserved the right of his delegation to explain, in plenary meeting, its vote against the draft decision.

78. Mr. BIRAUD (France) regretted that it had proved impossible to achieve the same spirit of consensus and equitable sharing of burdens as had prevailed at the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/221. All delegations, including his own, bore some responsibility for the fact that a vote had been taken. It was all the more unfortunate, given the great efforts expended in informal consultations, that the vote had been taken on the least imaginative text.

79. His delegation had abstained because to vote in favour would mean placing a heavy and perhaps lasting burden on certain new republics of the former Soviet Union. A vote in favour also implied disregard for the opinion expressed by the Legal Counsel. A vote against the draft decision, on the other hand, would have represented an attack on the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions, which had done its best in exceptional circumstances. It would also have demanded an inordinate effort on the part of the Russian Federation, since the former Soviet Union was the first to suffer the effects of the scheme of limits. Above all, his delegation believed that the absence, even temporarily, of an assessment for some Member States would have detracted from their full participation in the work of the Organization.

80. The CHAIRMAN recalled the earlier statement by the representative of Barbados to the effect that a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/47/L.22 might not be required at the current stage of proceedings. In light of some of the statements made during discussion of the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/47/L.29, he proposed that no action be taken on the draft resolution during the current meeting.

81. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.40 p.m.